1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

1

Introduction

The basic occupation of the Okinawans has been and continues to be agriculture. The agricultural, not the fishing, wood gathering, or stonecutting community is typical. Fishing, stonecutting and forestry have been the occupations of certain villages or areas, or of certain groups within a village. This and the following chapter describe these ways of living. 463

Agricultural practices gathered from Hanashiro, Nagamo (to some extent), and Matsuda will be presented in this chapter. Hinatogawa has been omitted because it is primarily a fishing and stonecutting community, and there is nothing distinctive or unusual in its agriculture. This presentation avoids the repetitive description of similar activities that would follow from a discussion of each village separately. Significant differences, where they appear, will be mentioned, and in this manner, I hope, the identities of the individual villages will not be lost, despite the topical arrangement. 128

Okinawan agriculture is basically the story of four crops: rice, sweet potatoes, the soy bean, and sugar cane. Rice is a minor crop. Not all farmers grow it, and rice consumption rests both on homegrown products and imports. Individual farmers occasionally grow both to sell and for home use. Today it is less of a luxury than it was before the war because of the imports and the home grown crop. In Okinawa two crops a year are possible. 241 262 433 [439]

The sweet potato is the main crop. Cultivation continues throughout the year. Potatoes often are dug on a day to day basis as required for human or animal consumption. At any one time, the patches of sweet potatoes owned by a farmer may represent all stages of growth from a fresh transplanted field to a patch ready for digging. The sweet potato is the cheapest all purpose food, both for human and animal consumption. Okinawans tire of it because poverty enforces such frequent consumption. Since the war, the increased availability of rice for home use, and the opportunities of purchasing rice have relieved this complete dependence on the sweet potato. Among some families, though these are still few, the sweet potato has become the food of animals, with only select ones used at the table. But for the great majority the sweet potato still is the basic article of diet. It is cheap and easy to cultivate either by men or women. Little can be realized from its sale.

Soy beans are grown for home consumption. Making bean curd in the home is universal. Brown sugar is produced as a cash crop. Some is used in the home as a confection both for adults and children. [432] [263]

824
[262]
[432]
[462]
[494]

Soy beans have three main uses: soy sauce which is seldom made in the home, bean curd (tōfu) and miso, a bean paste, both always home made. For this reason, soy beans are grown mostly for home use, with the surplus sold. In Hanashiro, where the surpluses are greater, the beans may be sold in Naha, Shuri, or Itoman. Women do the selling, taking the beans to market on the buses, trucks, or three wheeled vehicles.

241
262

(2) Other types of beans such as the red dwarf bean (asuki) (Phaseolus angularis Wight), the kidney bean (ingen in Japanese, Phaseolus vulgaris L), the broad or horse bean (soramame in Japanese, Vician fabia L), and peas (endō in Japanese, Pisum sativum L) are grown for home use, usually in parcels which are closest to the house.

[263]
[252]

(3) The giant radish, (daikon in Japanese, Raphanus sativus L) is, after the soy bean, the most important of the minor crops grown for home use. This is the vegetable most favored either as a condiment, or as a side dish. It is eaten sliced raw, pickled, or fried in stripe in soy sauce. When eaten boiled, its flavor resembles that of a turnip.

(5) The pumpkin (Cucurbita pepo L) called nanka or kabocha, the latter name being derived from the word Cambodia from which the pumpkin was introduced into Japan. They are harvested in summer, and one crop a year, generally for home use, is grown. If the flesh
[231] becomes too ripe and turns reddish and sweet, it is not relished and the pumpkin is fed to the pigs.

(6) The cucumber (kiuri in Japanese, Cucumus sativus L) is a very minor crop. In none of the villages were they generally grown, and then only for home use.

(7) The hechima or tōgwa in Japanese, subui in Okinawan.[7] This is very large and cylindrical. In exceptional specimens, its outward appearance is indistinguishable from the water melon. Its flesh is
[184] white. In the two southern villages, the tōgwa is grown very sparingly. In Katsuda and the surrounding villages, it is more common. Here it is used to fill in during times of food shortage. Some specimens I have
[221] seen weighed over 100 pounds. It is planted after lunar New Years, harvested in the 6th or 7th lunar month, a period reaching from about January to May. From April to July, when other vegetables are scarce,
[252] it is often used as a substitute. The flesh when boiled is rather tasteless; it is commonly boiled and served with chunks of meat. The tōgwa, in the northern villages, is often stored in dark cool places
[251] away from the sunlight, often under the house. If not cut open, the melon can be saved for a year.

7 I am not certain whether this is Luffa cylindrica Roem, Luffa petola, Ser, the Luffa sponge, rag gourd, etc., whose pulp disappears when ripe to be replaced by a web of fibres.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

8

Daily Life of the Fishing Village

Fishing families may have informal gatherings toward the end of the day. On a late summer afternoon, the family may sit in the open doorway of the house, for hedges, fences, the barriers, and trees are rare. The wife may be nursing her naked child. Her husband, a fisherman, has changed into his indigo blue and white striped kimono, a tall, broad, deeply tanned man. Next to him sits his mother, over 70 years old, her hands tattooed, as are those of all the old women. She is wearing a kimono of the same color, but of a dot pattern. They sit on unrolled mats. On the veranda, three or four men, unwashed and still in their work clothes, discuss the events of the day. A lacquer tray with tea cups is on the floor near them and the tea (as it so often is) may be cold. There is brown sugar to eat along with the tea. The grandmother may be economically smoking a half or a third of a cigarette in the typical Japanese pipe. As it grows later, the wife gets up, pours some water in the stone mortar, and smashes the sweet potatoes with the long wooden pole. The men continue talking for a while, then take their leave. The wife, her work at the mortar finished, goes into the dirt kitchen to start the evening meal.

The wife of the fisherman has worries that do not bother the farmer's wife. There is always the danger that her husband, or son, will not return, a real possibility, of which the frequency of widowhood in Minatogawa is proof. Every season, there is at least one instance of a fisherman who has either been lost, or whose delay in returning has provoked intense worry. If crews are still out when an unexpected storm arises, there is considerable tension in the village. Since the war, rescues at sea are more likely than before. The village headman quickly reports overdue boats. The American forces have created much good will in seeking fishermen lost at sea.

Woman, on the other hand, have opportunities for leisure when the catch is light, or weather is unfavorable. At these times, they can busy themselves with other tasks, in the field, gathering stones, getting <u>miscanthus</u>, but they do not have the unremitting activity of the woman in the agricultural village. There is more visiting during the day than one observes in an agricultural village.

The fisherman, with or without land, tries to keep pigs and perhaps a few goats. In Minatogawa, the pens are often made of sandstone quarried here. Not only the floors and the sides, but the stalls are made of this material. One reason for this is the openness of the village and the danger that pigs will be killed in a storm. A typhoon may carry away the house, its owners having gone to the stronger house of a friend or relative, but pigs are an investment and an asset to be guarded.

Land Ownership and Rental Although Nanahan has only twenty-three houses, the land register lists thirty-five land owners. Two of these are persons who are tenants and who own only the houselots where they live. In addition, three other families live in Nanahan, owning neither houselot nor land, but renting both from the owner. Five families have moved to urban areas, but have kept the land, and have rented it out, chiefly to the settlers in the community. Of the five, one had never owned a houselot. Two sold their houselots and one rented his house out. The remaining one rented his houselot, which was later converted by the tenant into a dry field. 423 427

There is almost no one in Nanahan who is neither a renter nor a rentee. Ten of the registered land owners are minors, most of whom have inherited land from their fathers who were killed in the invasion. Two are sons of the leading landowner, who has apparently registered part of his land in his sons' names to avoid heavy taxes.

The annual rent for grassland in Nanahan is ¥0.30, or thirty 'sen', per 'tsubo'. In the one 'genya' sale for which information was available, a doctor living in Kochinda village sold a Nanahan man 1,000 'tsubo' for a total of ¥3,000. Dry land, or 'hatake', rents for ¥2 per 'tsubo', although better and more fertile land may command a higher rental. Riceland is not rented out for money, but for a portion of the crop. Under the most usual arrangement the renter keeps three-fifths of the crop and delivers to the owner the remaining two-fifths. The renter must furnish all the manure, fertilizer, and labor. The Nanahan land register records nine plots as having been sold since 1947. 423 427 435

The Nanahan farmers say that the best thing the military ever did was to order in 1947 the making of a land survey and the drawing of land ownership maps. They said it is very effective in protecting boundaries and preventing quarrels. 423

3. Diet

Although daily Okinawan cuisine is in general very similar to that of Japan, some difference is seen in the dependence on the sweet potato, and the use of pork. Feast foods have more local flavor and are considerably different from those of Japan. The frequent typhoons occasionally cause temporary famine, and it is during the famines that Okinawan food and food substitutes differ most from Japanese standards. Finally, one major point of difference is in the use of sugar in the household; three centuries of experience with the crop has given rise to many traits and patterns centered around the use of sugar in the home. These four categories are discussed in this section on diet. 262 171 [263]

Ordinary Food The typical Okinawan breakfast is generally boiled sweet potatoes ('imo'), 'miso' (soybean paste) soup and vegetables. The noon meal is boiled sweet potatoes, noodles, and vegetables. The evening meal consists usually of boiled rice, 'miso' soup and vegetables. The most frequently consumed vegetables are mustard cabbage, Chinese cabbage, green onions, wax melon, giant radish, chopped dried radish, carrots and cabbage. Other foods added as occasional variety are wheat fluff, seaweed, soybean curd, and canned fish. 262

261 262 Famine Food and Wartime Substitutes The standard famine foods on Okinawa have always been dried sweet potato chips or refuse from the making of starch, sago palm nuts and the pulp of the same palm. The latter two are eaten with restraint, as they contain small [252] amounts of an alkaloid poison. The sweet potato materials are made into soups, and the sago palm provides a type of flour for deep frying, or 'tempura'.

[137] During the last war, soups were also made from the stem of the plant Ligularia Kaempferia, known as 'tsuwabuki' in Japanese, and chiipappā in Okinawan. One Nanahan farmer related, "The chiipappā which I ate in Kin-son during the war was delicious, and one felt better after eating it. When I came back here, I tried our local variety, but it is bitter and inedible." The [252] giant African snail was used to alleviate famine just before the invasion. It was boiled in its shell, then de-shelled and the "snail juice" washed out with a bitter orange called shiisā. The meat was then fried with vegetables and the white part of a leek.

273 177 276 272 Japanese soldiers during the war taught the Okinawans how to make a strong liquor from sugar cane, as no real 'sake' or 'awamori' was then available. Tobacco was also scarce, and pine tree bark was substituted. Some people preferred to smoke the leaves of the 'mogusa' plant, which is also used for cautery. One very poor family in Nanahan still retains the practice. Tea could not be bought in the late pre-invasion period, and the beans of the lantana bush furnished a palatable substitute.

263 [574] [757] Uses of Sugar in the Home When a guest calls at an Okinawan farmer's home, he is served tea, black sugar chunks, and quite often 'awamori'. Many other uses were related. It is used in batter for deep frying; for cure of headache, sickness, and fainting spells; for a hangover; and when food is not delicious.